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**LOSS OF 15TH B-52**  
**IN RAIDS ON NORTH**  
**ANNOUNCED BY U.S.**

**3 Other Planes Also Downed**  
**—Total of Missing Airmen**  
**Since Dec. 18 Put at 85**

**BOMBING HALT RUMORED**

**But It Could Be New Year's**  
**Lull — Another Hospital**  
**Attacked, Hanoi Says**

By SYLVAN FOX  
 Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Saturday, Dec. 30—The loss of another B-52 heavy bomber and three smaller aircraft was announced by the United States command yesterday.

The command said that the B-52 was shot down in the vicinity of Hanoi Thursday and that its crew was missing.

[Medical sources in Hanoi said American fighter-bombers had struck a second hospital, near one that was hit last week, according to Agence France-Presse. Page 5.]

During the current air offensive against North Vietnam, which began on Dec. 18, the command has refused to divulge the number of men aboard lost B-52s, contending that this would reduce their chance to escape capture. Normally, however, the bombers carry a crew of six.

The latest loss brings to 15 the total number of B-52's that the command has reported shot down by the North Vietnamese since the start of the heavy bombing less than two weeks ago.

**Phantoms Reported Down**

The other aircraft reported lost over North Vietnam by the command were two F-4 Phantom jets and a RA-5 reconnaissance plane. The Phantoms went down on Wednesday and the reconnaissance plane Thursday, a spokesman said.

The six crewmen aboard the three planes were reported missing.

By unofficial tally, the latest reported losses bring the total

shot down during the current offensive to 25 and the number of airmen believed to be missing or captured to 82.

Hanoi says it has shot down 76 United States aircraft, including 33 of the huge B-52's.

**Rumor of Bombing Halt**

As the new United States losses were announced here, there were widespread but unconfirmed reports that a halt in the heavy bombing of the North might come within the next few days, thereby opening the way for resumption of peace talks between Hanoi and Washington.

The speculation started with a report published Thursday in the semiofficial newspaper Tin Song. The paper said that Ellsworth Bunker, the United States Ambassador, and General Frederick C. Weyand, the United States Commander in Vietnam, had informed President Nguyen Van Thieu that the bombing north of the 20th Parallel would end on Sunday.

According to South Vietnam-

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ese sources, the meeting in the presidential palace was attended only by President Thieu, Mr. Bunker, and Mr. Thieu's secretary, Hoang Duc Nha. None of the participants were available for comment.

It is rare that the United States Ambassador and the United States military commander visit Mr. Thieu together.

A South Vietnamese source close to the Presidential Palace described the speculation about the impending halt in the bombing north of the 20th Parallel as "plausible." Other South Vietnamese sources said that the Tin Song report was correct.

No American civilian officials would comment on the report. A spokesman for the United States military command said only that "as of this time" the operation against North Vietnam "is still ongoing."

One American source suggested that a halt in bombing would take place but might be nothing more than a New Year's pause, similar to the 36-hour suspension for Christmas.

The United States command continued to maintain its pol-

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icy of silence about what targets were hit in the raids during the 24 hours that ended at 8 A.M. yesterday. This policy has prevailed since the raids began on Dec. 18.

**Issued Delayed Summary**

On Wednesday, however, the command issued a summary of some 55 military targets that were hit in North Vietnam during the preceding nine days. Almost half were in and around Hanoi and Haiphong, North Vietnam's largest cities.

Yesterday, the command also refused to comment on B-52 raids against targets in South Vietnam, although the kettle-drum roar at 15 second intervals that is characteristic of B-52 bombing could be heard clearly in downtown Saigon.

A United States official privately confirmed that the sounds were produced by B-52's striking near Saigon, but he said the command could not issue any details of B-52 activity anywhere in Indochina, including South Vietnam.

For the last seven years, until about two weeks ago, B-52 raids in South Vietnam were

regularly reported by the military command here.

On the ground, military action continued to be relatively light except in the area around Quang Tri in the northernmost part of South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese said 43 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed in clashes near the devastated city of Quang Tri Thursday and yesterday. They reported that three South Vietnamese marines were killed and one wounded in the engagements.

The South Vietnamese also reported that three rounds of unidentified fire hit the former royal capital of Hue early this morning, killing one civilian and wounding four.

It was the first attack on Hue since Oct. 30, when the city was hit by four rockets. Two civilians were killed and one was wounded in that attack.

**Attacks in Laos Reported**

Special to The New York Times

VIENTIANE, Laos, Dec. 29—Heavy Communist attacks were reported today against two important positions of the Laotian Government, one of them athwart the only road between Vientiane and the royal capital of Luang Prabang.

According to military sources here, a major attack was under way against the Government position of Sala Phou Khoun, a mountain station on national route 13 about 100 miles north of here.

Route 13 has long been closed to military traffic because of sections of Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese control extending across it. But Sala Phou Khoun has remained an important Government outpost.